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CALL FOR APPLICANTS: Director of Recreation

The City of Takoma Park, Maryland is seeking a proven, dedicated, responsive, and experienced individual for its new Director of Recreation.



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TAKOMA PARK... An Exceptional Opportunity!

This is an exciting opportunity to provide leadership to an established recreation department in a community which borders Washington, D. C. The City of Takoma Park, Maryland is seeking an experienced Director of Recreation to take the place of a recreation director who is relocating after ten years of service with the City. The new Director of Recreation will be responsible for developing the strategies and tactics to take the department to a new level of success for the future.

ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

The City of Takoma Park is seeking a proven, dedicated, responsive, and experienced individual for its new Director of Recreation. The successful candidate will possess a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with a major in Recreation, Physical Education, or a related field and seven or more years of progressively responsible experience; or any combination of education, training, and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Experience in a similar sized municipal department is desired. A related Master's degree and certification as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) would be a plus.

The successful candidate must have a vision for the department and be able to set high standards and clear goals. He/she allows staff members to perform their jobs while holding them accountable for results. The successful candidate should serve as a mentor to departmental staff members and support their professional development. Given the small size of the department staff, the next Director of Recreation should be a team player who does not hesitate to roll up his/her sleeves and work alongside staff members.

Licenses and certifications required of the successful candidate include basic CPR, AED, and first aid and a valid Maryland driver's license or the ability to obtain one within a reasonable period of time.

The ideal candidate will be someone with knowledge of current recreation management principles, methodology, and procedures and have budget development and financial management experience. This person must be knowledgeable in meeting the recreational needs of a culturally and socio-economically diverse community.

Additional desired attributes of the next Director of Recreation include excellent verbal and written communication skills and strong abilities in marketing and promoting the services provided by the department. The successful candidate must be a decisive individual, and a collaborator with highly developed interpersonal skills and an orientation towards results. The ideal candidate is someone who enjoys working in a family-like atmosphere and enjoys reaching out to the community and being part of it.

The next Director of Recreation should be committed to delivering high quality services to City residents. The successful candidate should be engaged with the community, a listener, a motivator, and a professional. Also, the successful candidate must be open-minded, fair, highly ethical, and honest.

ABOUT THE TAKOMA PARK COMMUNITY

Takoma Park is a community known for its small town feel, active and involved residents and lively arts scene. The City is on the Washington, D.C. border, in Montgomery County, Maryland, so residents are able to participate in the rich cultural environment of a major metropolitan area while living in an attractive walkable community. The City includes families, single adults, and seniors who were attracted to Takoma Park by its easy access to Washington, D.C. and jobs, relatively affordable housing, excellent County schools, and mixture of people from around the world. Efforts by residents have led the City to declare itself a nuclear free zone and a sanctuary city. Successful local initiatives include domestic partner registry, voting privileges for non-citizens, and active support for regional schools. Takoma Park was one of the first cities in the United States to offer curbside recycling. The City is an official Tree City, USA and has received the Playful City designation. Takoma Park is called Azalea City for its festive springtime blooms.

Takoma Park was founded in 1883 by Benjamin Franklin Gilbert along the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The original community of Takoma Park lay on both sides of the railroad, part in the District of Columbia and part in Maryland. Even though it is now divided into two jurisdictions, the communities share many common issues such as commercial revitalization and crime fighting. In 1890, Takoma (meaning “High up...near Heaven”) Park, Maryland, was incorporated as a city, the first commuter suburb in Montgomery County. The City boasts the largest historic district in Montgomery County, with many Victorian and Sears catalog homes.

Takoma Park is primarily residential in character; approximately one-half of its housing units are rental units. Takoma Park has two primary commercial areas. The oldest shopping center, known for its historic buildings and eclectic flavor, is Old Takoma. It has an active inter-jurisdictional business association that is designated as a Maryland Main Street community. The other commercial area, known for its international businesses and clientele, is Takoma/Langley Crossroads. Major institutions within the City are Washington Adventist Hospital, Montgomery College, and Washington Adventist University.

The population of Takoma Park is approximately 17,000. Forty-three percent of the City’s population is Caucasian; 34 percent is black or African-American; and four percent is Asian. Fifteen percent of Takoma Park’s population indicates that they are Hispanic or Latino. Twenty-six percent of the City’s population was born in another country, with the majority originating from Central America and Africa. A number of foreign languages are spoken by Takoma Park residents; 23 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home.

Takoma Park residents have access to a wide variety of cultural and community activities. Several music festivals and street fairs are held in the City each year. The City’s recently renovated Auditorium is programmed with music, film, poetry, community presentations, and weekly City Council meetings. Residents also have ready access to the amenities of nearby Silver Spring and the cultural benefits of Washington, D.C.

Takoma Park is part of the outstanding Montgomery County Public School System. The middle school offers a magnet program for science, math, and computer science. Takoma Park high school students choose among several excellent schools; most attend nearby Montgomery Blair High School, which is among the top schools nationwide. There are a number of private schools within the City limits as well as in the area. Washington Adventist University and Montgomery College have facilities located in the City. There are many higher education facilities located in the Washington, D.C./ Baltimore region; the University of Maryland—College Park is located ten minutes down University Boulevard from Takoma Park.

Many Takoma Park residents commute to Washington, D.C. and adjacent suburbs to work in the federal government or with private employers. The residents of the City are well served by public transportation with the Takoma station on the Metro-rail Red Line and convenient RideOn and Metrobus routes throughout the community. Many residents bike to work. Three major airports are within easy distance from Takoma Park. Two of the airports can be reached by local transportation: Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. A Metro connection to Dulles International Airport is in the planning process.



ABOUT THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

Since the adoption of a new City Charter in 1989, Takoma Park has operated under a Council-Manager form of government. The Charter provides for a City Council made up of six members and a Mayor who is a voting member of the Council. The City Council members are elected officials who serve as the policy making body of the City. The Mayor, elected at-large for a two-year term, sets the Council agenda and chairs the Council meetings. The six City Council members are elected by ward for two-year non-staggered terms and vote on policy matters.

The responsibilities of the City Council include enacting ordinances and resolutions, adopting an annual budget, appointing the City Manager and the City Attorney, making appointments to City committees, appointing members to various boards and commissions, and representing the City at official functions.

The administration and operational activities of the City are directed by the City Manager and carried out by a professional staff. In addition to recreation, the City of Takoma Park offers a full range of municipal services. They include police, public works, housing, community development, code enforcement, library, stormwater management, and general administration.

One of the City's goals is to provide the highest quality of service to its residents.

The City's operating and capital budget for Fiscal Year 2012 totals approximately \$24.5 million. Property tax revenues constitute the single largest source of the City's operating revenues.

The City of Takoma Park has a Recreation Committee, appointed by the City Council. The Committee provides input and advice to the City Council on community recreation needs and recommendations on programming.



ABOUT THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Director of Recreation is appointed by and reports to the City Manager.

The Takoma Park Recreation Department offers a broad range of recreation and leisure programs that attract participants of all ages, including before- and after school care, senior programming, summer youth camps, and sports programming. A large percentage of department customers live outside the City boundaries. The anticipated FY 2012 annual operating budget for the Takoma Park Recreation Department is \$1.34 million.

Departmental services are provided by a staff of 17.77 full-time equivalents. Of these, nine are full-time staff members, with the balance comprised of year-round and seasonal part-time employees. Certain Recreation staff members are represented by a collective bargaining unit (AFSCME Local 3399).

The department retains contractual instructors to run many programs. In addition, hundreds of volunteers generously devote their time, serving as coaches for youth sports program, youth mentors, and senior program instructors. The department also offers youth opportunities to gain service learning hours.

The department's Mission Statement is as follows:

“The Takoma Park Recreation Department is committed to developing and implementing quality programs for participants of all ages. We value creativity and diversity. To achieve these goals our programs and services are delivered in an effective and efficient manner emphasizing safety, convenience and affordability.”

Priorities for the new Recreation Director include the following:

- Explore cost-effective ways to build upon the department's existing full-range of recreation programming. With the popularity of the department's programs, use by other City departments, and the community's demand for meeting rooms, space availability is limited.
- Assess existing program fee structures, striking an appropriate balance between cost-recovery and access to recreation services, particularly given the economic diversity of the community.
- Continue to explore and implement partnership arrangements with other governmental entities, the business community, and other organizations to provide cost-effective recreation services to the community.
- Evaluate and provide direction on teen programming, recognizing the general challenges of adolescence and the varied interests and financial capacity of teens. Some area teens have become involved in local gangs, and the department wishes to continue its efforts to provide a safe, fun, and supportive environment for all teens.
- Continue to assess community interests and needs for recreation services through a variety of objective and proactive means, recognizing that interests and needs vary throughout the community and that some stakeholders are more vocal than others.
- Evaluate the existing use of volunteers in department activities and assess to what extent their use could be expanded.

Facilities:

Facilities managed by the Takoma Park Recreation Department are the Takoma Park Community Center, Takoma Park Recreation Center, Heffner Park Community Center, and three small sports fields. Of these, the Takoma Park Recreation Center and two of the sports fields are owned by other governmental jurisdictions but are operated and maintained by the City under contract. The City also rents space at adjacent schools (gyms, multi-purpose rooms, and indoor swimming pool) for programming.

The Takoma Park Community Center, in the center of town, includes a state of the art auditorium, a game room, a dance room, an art room, a teen lounge, a senior room, a computer center, a media lab, and four meeting rooms. The Community Center also houses the City of Takoma Park administrative offices, and public library. A small outdoor basketball court is on the property. The Takoma Park Recreation Center, on the east side of town, has a gymnasium, weight/fitness facilities, and meeting room. The Heffner Park Community Center, located in a small neighborhood park with a playground, provides a meeting room and kitchen.

In addition to school use during the school day and official City programming, the sports fields are used for youth football, soccer, baseball, and softball which are operated by independent volunteer organizations. Sports field use is in high demand in the region.

The department oversees the rental of City facilities, including park pavilions, fields, gym, the Community Center Auditorium, and meeting rooms.



COMPENSATION AND APPLICATION INFO

The expected starting salary for the Recreation Director of the City of Takoma Park will be market competitive in the mid-\$90K range, depending on the experience and qualifications of the selected individual. The City offers a competitive fringe benefit program. Reasonable relocation expenses will be provided to the selected candidate.

Confidential resumes should be sent by close of business, Wednesday, June 15, 2011 to:

Karen Hampton, Human Resources Director
The City of Takoma Park, Maryland
7500 Maple Avenue,
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912
FAX: (301) 270-8794
E-Mail: karenh@takomagov.org
Website: www.takomaparkmd.gov

The City of Takoma Park is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minority and Female Candidates are Encouraged to Apply.

